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A
PLEASANT and DELIGHTFUL
HISTORY
OF
Thomas Hickathrift.



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A Pleasant and Delightful

HISTORY OF

THOMAS HICKATHRIFT.

*He that doth buy this little Book,
Observe what you in it do look;
When you have read it, you may say,
Your Money is not thrown away.*

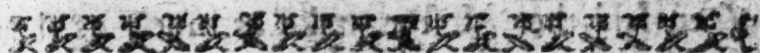
CHAP. I.

Of his Birth, Parentage, and Education.

IN the Reign before William the Conqueror, I have read in an antient History, that there dwelt a man in the Parish of the Isle of Ely, in the County of Cambridge, whose name was Thomas Hickathrift

a poor man, and a day Labourer; yet he was a very stout man, and able to perform two Days work instead of one: He having one Son and no more children in the world he called him by his own name Thomas Hickathrift. This old man put his son to good Learning, but he would take none; for he was as we call them in this Age, none of the wisest sort but something less, and had no Docility at all in him.

His father being soon called out of the world, his mother was tender of him maintained him by her hand labour as well as she could, he being slothful, and not willing to work to get a penny for his living; but all his delight was to be in the chimney-corner, and would eat as much at one time as would serve four or five men; for he was in Height, when he was but ten Years of age, about eight feet, and in thickness five feet, and his hand was like unto a shoulder of mutton; and in all his parts from top to toe, he was like unto a Monster, and yet his great Strength was not known.



CHAP. II.

How Thomas Hickathrift's strength came to be known.

THE first Time that his Strength was known, was by his Mother's going to a rich Farmer's House (she being but a poor woman) to desire a bottle of straw to shift herself and her son *Thomas*. The Farmer being a very honest charitable Man, bid her take what she would. She going home to her Son *Tom*, said, I pray go to such a place and fetch me a Bottle of straw, I have asked him leave. He swore he would not go: Nay, prithee *Tom* go, said his old Mother. He swore again he would not go, unless she would borrow him a cart Rope. She being willing to please him, because she would have some Straw, went and borrowed him a Cart Rope to his Desire. ☛

He taking it, went his way; coming to the Farmer's House, the Master was in the Barn, and two Men a threshing, said *Tom*, I am come for a Bottle of Straw
Tom

Tom, said the Master, take as much as thou can'st carry. He laid down the Cart Rope and began to make his Bottle: Said they: *Tom*, they Rope is too short, and jeer'd poor *Tom*, but he fitted the Man well for it; for he made his Bottle, and when he had finished it, there was supposed to be a Load of Straw in it, of two thousand Weight. Said they, what a great Fool art thou, thou can'st not carry the Tenth of it? *Tom* took the Bottle, and flung it over his shoulder, and made no more of it than we do of an hundred weight, to the great Admiration of Master and Man.

Tom Hickathrift's Strength being then known in the Town, they would no longer let him lie baking by the Fire in the Chimney-corner, every one would be hiring him to work: They seeing him to have so much Strength, told him, that it was a Shame for him to live such a lazy Course of Life, and to lie idle Day after Day, as he did.

Tom seeing them bate him in such a Manner as they did, went first to one Work, then to another; but at length came a Man, who would hire him to go to the Wood; for he had a Tree to bring Home
and

and he would content him. Tom went with him, and took with him four Men besides; but when they came to the Wood, they set the Cart to the Tree, and began to draw it up with Pulleys: Tom seeing them not able to stir it, said, Stand away, ye Fools, then takes it up, and sets it on one End, and lays it in the Cart:



Now, says he, see what a Man can do Marry it is true, said they. When they had done, as they came through the Wood they met the Woodman. Tom said, I have just now made this little cart go up the

with

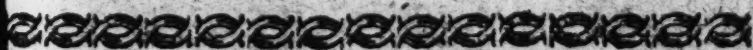
with. Ay, said the Woodman, take one that thou can'st carry. Tom espy'd a Tree bigger than that one that was in the Cart, and lays it on his Shoulder, and goes home with it as fast as the Cart and the six Horses could draw it; This was the second Time that Tom's Strength was known.

When Tom began to know that he had more strength than twenty men, he then began to be merry and very tractable, and would run, or jump, took great Delight to be amongst company, and to go to Fairs and Meetings, to see sports and pastimes.

Going to a Feast, the young men were all met, some to Cudgels, some to Wrestling, some throwing the Hammer, and the like; Tom stood a little to see the sport, and at last goes to them that were throwing the Hammer; and standing a little to see their Man-like sport, at last he takes the Hammer in his Hand to feel the Weight of it, and bid them stand out of the way, for he would throw it as far as he could. Aye said the Smith and jeer'd poor Tom, you'll throw it a great way, I'll warrant you: Tom took the Hammer in his hand and flung it; and there was a River about five or six Furlongs off, and flung it into that: When he had done

done he bid the Smith fetch the Hammer again, and laughed the Smith to Scorn.

When Tom had done this Exploit, he would go to Wrestling tho' he had no more skill of it than an Ass, but what he did by Strength; yet he flung all that came to oppose him, for if he once laid hold of them, they were gone. Some he would throw over his head, some he would lay down flily, and how he pleased: He would not like to strike at their Heels, but flung them two or three Yards from him, ready to break their necks asunder; so that none at last durst go into the Ring to wrestle with him, for they took him to be some Devil that was came among them; for Tom's fame spread more and more in the Country.



CHAP. III.

How Tom came to be a Brewer's Man; and how he came to kill a Giant, and at last was Mr. Hickathrift.

TOM's Fame being spread abroad both far and near, there was not a Man durst give him an angry word, for he was
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something Fool-hardy and did not care what
 hed id unto them ; so that all them who knew
 him would not in the least displeate him.
 At length there was a Brewer at Lynn, that
 wanted a good lusty Man to carry his Beer
 to the Marsh, and to Wisbech ; hearing of
 Tom, went to hire him, but Tom seemed
 coy, and would not be his Man, until his
 Mother and Friends perswaded him, and his
 Master entreated him, likewise promised
 him that he should have a new suit of Cloaths,
 and every thing answerable from Top to
 Toe ; besides, he should eat and drink of the
 best. Tom at last yielded to be his Man,
 and his Master told him how far he must
 go ; for you must understand there was a
 monstrous Giant, who kept some part of the
 Marsh. and none durst go that way ; for if
 they did, he would keep t-em, or kill them ;
 or else he would make bond slaves of them.

But to come to Tom and his Master, he
 did more work in one day, than all his men
 could do in three ; so that his Master seeing
 him very tractable, and to look well after
 his Business, made him his head Man to go
 into the Marsh to carry Beer by himself,
 for he needed no man with him. Tom went
 every day in the week to *Wisbech*, which
 was a very good Journey, and it was twenty
 Miles the Road-way,

Tom going so long that wearisome Journey, and finding that Way which the Giant kept was nearer by half, and Tom having now got much more Strength than before, by being so well kept, and drinking so much strong Ale as he did: One day he was going to *Wissbeck*, and without saying any Thing to his Master, or to any of his Fellow Servants; he was resolved to make the nearest way to the Wood; or loose his life to win the Horse, or lose the Saddle, to kill or be kill'd, if he met with the Giant: And with this Resolution he goes the nearest Way with his Cart and horses, to go to *Wissbeck*; but the Giant perceiving him, and seeing him to be so bold, thought to prevent him, and came, intending to take his Cart for a Prize, but Tom cared not a Farthing for him.

The Giant met Tom like a Lion, as tho' he would have swallowed him up at a mouthful: Sarrah said he, who gave you authority to come this way? Do you not know that I make all stand in Fear of my Sight, and you, like an impudent Rogue, must come and sling my Gates open at your pleasure? How dare you presume to do this? Are you so careless of your Life? I will make thee an Example for all Rogues under the Sun; Dost thou not care what thou dost

dost? And do you not see how many heads hang upon yonder Tree, that have offended my Law! But thy head shall hang higher than all the rest for an example.

Tom made him answer, A Turd in your Teeth for your news, for you shall not find me like one of them. No, said the Giant; why? Thou art but a fool if thou comest to fight with such a one as I am, and bring no weapon to defend thyself withal. Said Tom, I have a weapon here will make you understand you are a traitorly Rogue. Aye, Sarah, said the Giant, and took that word in high disdain, that Tom should call him traitorly Rogue, and with that he ran into his cave to fetch out his Club, intending to dash out Tom's brains at the first blow.

Tom knew not what to do for a weapon, for he knew his whip would do but little good against such a monstrous Beast as he was, for he was in height about twelve feet, and six about the waist; but while the Giant went for his Club, Tom bethought himself of two very good weapons, for he makes no more ado, but takes his cart and turns it upside down, takes out the Axle-tree and a wheel for his Shield and Buckler; and very good weapons they were especially in Time of need.

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The Giant coming out again, began to stare at Tom, to see him take the Wheel in one hand, and the Axle-tree in the other Hand, to defend him with. O! said the Giant, you are like to do great service with these Wea-



pons; I have here a Twig that will beat thee and thy Wheel and Axle-tree to the Ground: that which the Giant call'd a Twig, was as thick as some Mill-posts are) but Tom was not

not daunted for his big and threatening speeches, for he perfectly saw there was no Way except one, which was to kill or be killed; so the Giant made at Tom with such a vehement Force, that he made Tom's wheel crack again, and Tom let the Giant as good, for he took him such a weighty Blow on the side of his Head, that he made the Giant reel again. What, said Tom, are you drunk with my strong Beer already!

The Giant recovering laid on Tom most Sad Blows; but still as they came, Tom kept them off with his wheel, so that he had no hurt at all: In short, Tom plied his work so well, and laid such huge Blows on the Giant that Sweat and Blood together ran down his Face, and being fat and foggy; with fighting so long, he was almost tired out, and asked Tom to let him drink a little Water, and then he would fight with him again: No, said Tom, my mother did not teach me that Wit; who would be the Fool then? Tom finding the Giant began to grow weary, and that he failed in his Blows, thought it was best to make Hay while the Sun did shine, for he laid on so fast as though he had been mad, till he brought the Giant down to the Ground. The Giant seeing himself down, and Tom laying so hard on him, made him roar in a most

most lamentable manner, and prayed him not to take away his Life, and he would do any thing for him, and yield himself to him, to be his Servant; but Tom having no more mercy on him than a Dog or a Bear, laid still on the Giant, 'till he laid him for dead, and when he had done he cut off his Head, and went into his Cave where he found great Store of Gold and Silver, which made his heart to leap.

Now having done this Action, in killing the Giant, he put his Cart together again, loaded it, and drove it to *Wibech*, and delivered his Beer, and coming home to his Master, he told it to him; his Master was so overjoy'd at the News, that he would not believe him, 'till he had seen: and getting up the next day, he and his Master went to see if he spoke the truth or not, together with most of the Town of *Lynn*; when they came to the Place and found the Giant dead, he then shewed the Place where the Head was, and what Silver and Gold there was in the Cave; all of them leaped for Joy, for this Monster was a great Enemy to all the Country.

This news was spread all up and down the Country, how *Tom Hickabrist* had killed the

the Giant, and well was he that could run or go to see the Giant and the Cave: Then all the Folks made Bonfires, for Joy; and Tom was a better man respected than before.

Tom took possession of the Giant's Cave by consent of the whole Country, and every one said he deserved twice as much more, Tom pulled down the Cave, built him a fine House where the cave stood; and in the Ground that the Giant kept by Force and Strength, some of which he gave to the Poor for their Common, the rest he made Pastures of, and divided the most Part into Tillage, to maintain him and his Mother *Jane Hickathrift*.

Tom's Fame was spread both far and near throughout the Country; and it was no longer Tom but *Mr. Hickathrift*; so that he was now the chiefest Man among them; for the People feared Tom's Anger as much as they did the Giant before. Tom kept Men and Maid Servants and lived most bravely; he made a Park to keep Deer in; near to his House he built a Church, and gave it the Name of *Sr. Jame's Church*, because he killed the Giant on that Day. which is so called to this Hour; He did many good deeds and became a public benefactor to all Persons that lived near him.



CHAP. IV.

How Tom kept a pack of Hounds: His kicking the Foot-ball quite away: Also, how he had like to have been robbed by four thieves and how he escaped.

TOM having got so much Money about him, and being not used to it, could hardly tell how to dispose of it; but yet he did use means to do it; for he kept a Pack of Hounds, and Men to hunt with him; and who but Tom then. So he took such delight in Sports, that he would go far and near to any Meetings, as Cudgel-play, Bear-bating, Foot-ball and the like.

Now as Tom was riding one Day, he alighted off his Horse to see that Sport, for they were playing for a wager; Tom was a Stranger, and none did know him there: but Tom spoiled their sport: for he meeting the Foot-ball, took it such a kick, that they never found their Ball more; they could see it fly, but whether none could tell: They all wondered at it and began to quarrel with Tom; but some of them got nothing by it, for Tom gets a great Spar which belonged to a House
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that was blown down: and all that stood in his way he knocked down, so that all the Country was up in Arms to take *Tom*; but all in vain. for he manfully made way wherever he came.

When he was going from them, and returning Homewards, he chanced to be somewhat late in the Evening on the Road, there met him four stout lusty Rogues, that had been robbing Passengers that way, and none could escape them, for they robbed all they met both Rich and Poor. They thought when they met with *Tom*, he would be a good prize for them; perceiving he was alone, made Cock-sure of his Money; but they were mistaken, for he got a prize by them. Whereupon meeting him, they bid him stand and deliver. What, said *Tom* shall I deliver? Your Money Sarrah, said they; But, said *Tom*, you will give me better words for it, and you must be better armed. Come, come, said they, we do not come here parley, but we come for Money, and Money we will have, before we stir from this place. Aye, said *Tom*. is it so, nay then get it and take it.

So then one of them made at him; but he presently unarmed him, and took away his Sword, which was made of good trusty Steel and

and smote so hard at the others, that they began to put Spurs to their Horses and be gone; but he soon stayed their Journey, for one of them having a Portmanteau behind him, Tom supposing there was Money in it fought with a great deal of more Courage than before, 'till at last he killed Two of the Four, and the other two he wounded very sore, so that they cried out for quarters, and with



much ado he gave them their Lives, but took all their Money, which was about two hundred Pounds, to bear his Expences home. Now when Tom came home, he told them how he had served the Foot-ball Players, and the four Highwaymen, which caused a laugh from his old mother; then refreshing himself, went to see how all Things were, and what

what his Men had done since he went from Home.

Then going into his Forest, he walked up and down and at last met with a lusty Tinker that had a good Staff, on his Shoulder, and a great dog to carry his Leather Bag and Tools.



At work. Tom asked the Tinker from whence he came, and whither he was going, for there was no Highway: But the Tinker being a sturdy fellow, bid him go look, and what was that

that to him, for Fools would be meddling. No, says Tom, but I'll make you know before you and I part, it is to me. Aye, said the Tinker. I have been this three long Years, and have had no Combat with any Man, and none durst make me an Answer; I think they



be all Cowards in this Country, except it be a Man who is called Thomas Hickathrift, who killed a Giant, him I would fain see to have one Combat with him. Aye, said Tom, but methinks I might be Master in your Mouth; I am the Man, what have you to say to me? Well by, said the Tinker, verily I am glad we have met so happily together, that we may have one single Combat. Sure, said Tom, you do

but jest. Mirry, said the Tinker, I am in earnest. A Match, said Tom, will you give me Leave to get a Twig? Aye, lays the Tinker, hang him that will fight a Man unarmed, I learn that.



Tom steps to the Gate, and takes one of the Rails for his Staff, so they fell to work, the Tinker at Tom, and Tom at the Tinker, like unto two Giants they laid one at the other. The Tinker had on a Leathern Coat and at every Blow Tom gave the Tinker, his Coat cracked again, yet the Tinker did not give any to Tom an Inch; but Tom gave

gave the Tinker a Blow on the Side of the Head, which felled the Tink̄r to the ground. *Now Tinker where are you now?* said Tom.

But the Tinker being a Man of Metal, leaped up again, and gave Tom a blow which made him reel again, and followed his blows, and then took Tom on the other Side, which made Tom's Neck crack again. Tom flung down the Weapon, and yielded the Tinker to be the best man and took him Home to his House, where I shall leave Tom and the Tinker till they be recovered of their many Wounds and Bruises: Which Relation is more enlarged as you may read in the Second Part of THOMAS HICKATHRIFF.



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